from 0.55 in 2001-02 to 0.44 in 2002-03, 0.41 in 2003-04, 0.29 in 2004-05, 0.28 in 2005-06 and 0.23 in 2006-07.

(e) and (f) System of safety audit by multi-disciplinary teams already exists on the Indian Railways. Bi-monthly safety audit of different Divisions of the concerned zonal railway as well as six-monthly inter-railway safety audit of one zonal railway by another railway are conducted on regular basis. Safety audit reports and action taken reports on these audits are monitored and assessed for issue of instructions as may be further required for safe train operations.

Modernisation work in Southern Railway

1288. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of modernisation work undertaken in Southern Railway in the last three years, Station-wise; and

(b) the details of work proposed to be undertaken in the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Following twenty five (25) railway stations have been identified for modernisation under "Touch & Feel" scheme:

Chengalpattu, Katpadi, chennai, Egmore, Tambaram, Tiruttani, Erode, Coimbatore, Palghat, calicut, Mangalore, Ernakulam Jn, Trichur, Quilon, Thiruvananthapuram, Kanniyakumari, Puducherry, Vridhachalam, Tiruchirappalli Jn, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Dindigul, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin & Virudhunagar.

In addition, twenty two (22) more railway stations have been identified during the year 2007-08 under the scheme. The railway stations are—

Chennai Beach, Ambur, Jolarpettai, Puttur, Sullurupeta, Salem, Tiruppur, Shoranur Jn, Kannur, Thelasseri, Nagercoil, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chengannur, Srirangam, Tiruvarur, Nagappattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Karaikkudi, Palani, Rameswaram & Ramanathapuram.

The main emphasis of the modernisation works is for the overall improvement of station by way of landscaping of the circulating area, adequate lighting arrangements, improvement to station premises, main platforms, waiting halls and retiring rooms, user-friendly electronic display boards, etc.

In addition to above, modernisation work in the form of development of 48 stations identified as Model stations has also been undertaken. Development/modernisation of railway stations as Model Stations involves upgradation of various passenger amenities as per norms. These stations are—Ambur, Arakkonam, Chengalpattu, Chennai Beach, Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore, Jolarpettai, Katpadi, Mambalam, Tiruttani, Badagara, Kozhikode, Kannur, Coimbatore, Erode Jn, Kankandai, Mangalore Jn, Palakkad Jn, Salem Jn, Shoranur, Tellicherry, Tiruppur, Tirur, Alleppey, Aluva, Chengannur, Ernakulam Jn, Ernakulam Town, Kanniyakumari, Kayankulam, Kottayam, Nagercoil, Quilon, Tirucalla, Trichur, Thiruvananthapuram Central, Varkala, Puducherry, Thanjavur, Tiruchchirpalli Jn, Villupuram, Dindigul, Kovilpatti, Madurai, Rameshwaram, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Virudhunagar.

Development/modernisation of railway station as Model station involves upgradation of various passenger amenities as per norms.

Augmentation of passenger amenities at stations is a continuous process and is undertaken through Annual Works Programme depending upon need, availability of funds.

Reduction in Travelling time of trains

1289. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railways has studied ways to reduce the travelling time of trains plying between Trivandrum and Delhi and Chennai and Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that trains on above routes take long and circuitous routes and create major hardships for people of Tamil Nadu and Kerala;

(c) what steps are proposed to find long term solutions to create a better route for connecting Northern and Southern destinations; and

(d) in what way, the railways can find some short term solutions to reduce journey time on the North-South routes alongwith the details of the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Following trains running from New Delhi/Nizamuddin to Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) have been speeded up from 01.12.2006.

(1) 2625 Thiruvananthapuram-New Delhi Kerala Express by 145 minutes.

(2) 2626 New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram Kerala Express by 60 minutes.

(3) 2643 Thiruvananthapuram-Nizamuddin Express by 110 minutes.

(4) 2644 Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram Express by 60 minutes.

(5) 2431 Thiruvananthapuram-Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express by 15 minutes.

(6) 2621 Chennai-New Delhi Tamil Nadu Express by 25 minutes.

Trains between New Delhi and Thiruvananthapuram are running *via* two different major routes *viz* Ist route *via* Nagpur, Vijayawada, Coimbatore, Ernakulam and 2nd one *via* Vadodara, Madgaon, Ernakulam. 2625/2626 Thiruvananthapuram-New Delhi Kerala Express running *via* Ist route takes 50'05/51'20 hours and 2431/2432 Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram Express running *via* 2nd route takes 41'10"/42'20" hours.

Trains between New Delhi and Chennai are running *via* Nagpur and Vijayawada. 2621/2622 New Delhi-Chennai Tamil Nadu Express takes 33'/32'30" hours and 2611/2612 Nizamuddin-Chennai Garib Rath Express takes 28'10"/28'10" hours.

Closing of unmanned Level Crossings

1290. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has asked the Railways to file a status report on the proposal to close down all unmanned level crossings in the country to prevent accidents;

(b) if so, what are the total number of unmanned level crossings in the country at present, State-wise;

(c) whether mostly the accidents are occurring on these unmanned level crossings;

(d) if so, whether Government has accepted the Supreme Court's order in this regard; and

(e) if not, the main reasons therefor?